DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 735 FL 027 423

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TITLE	Culture-Specific Language Styles: The Development of Oral Narrative and Literacy. Child Language and Child Development.
SPONS AGENCY	San Francisco State Univ., CA.; Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA. Graduate School of Education.; American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.; Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA. Inst. for International Development.
REPORT NO	Ser-1
ISBN	ISBN-1-85359-573-X
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	316p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Multilingual Matters, UTP, 2250 Military Road, Tonawanda, NY 14150 (cloth: ISBN-1-85359-574-8, $89.95; paper: ISBN-1-85359-573-X, $44.95). Web site: http://www.multilingual-matters.com.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available From EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Development; Childrens Literature; *Cultural Influences; Discourse Analysis; Foreign Countries; *Language Acquisition; Language Styles; *Literacy; Mothers; *Parent Child Relationship; *Personal Narratives; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; Reading Aloud to Others; Socialization; Sociocultural Patterns
IDENTIFIERS	*Japan

ABSTRACT

This book examines how culturally specific aspects of Japanese preschool children's narrative discourse skills develop and eventually lead to literacy. It discusses how language shapes and is shaped by culture-specific experiences, analyzing how young Japanese children develop narrative structure and how Japanese parents guide their children in the acquisition of culture-specific styles of narrative and literacy. The book is based on research involving 20 preschool children ages 4 and 5 years and their mothers. Data consisted of children's and mothers' monologic narratives that were elicited by a neutral researcher; mother-child interactions, with a focus on mothers' utterances when they verbally interacted with their children during narrative elicitation; and mother-child interactions in the context of book reading activities. Part 1 of the book provides a theoretical and ethnographic background to the study. Part 2 analyzes the personal narratives told by Japanese preschool children and adults. Part 3 studies mother-child narrative discourse interactions, not only in Japan, but also in North America, using categories of meaning that emerge from the data. Part 4 examines the relationship between sociocultural background and young Japanese children's literacy development. (Contains approximately 400 references.) (SM)

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